

December 28, 1955

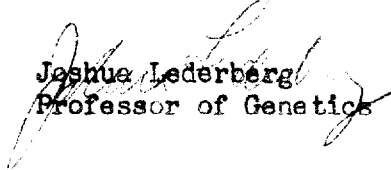
Dr. Niels K. Jerne
State Serum Institute
Copenhagen, Denmark

Dear Dr, Jerne:

I would appreciate the favor of a reprint of your note on antibody formation which appears in the No.v. 1955 , Proc. Nat. Acad. U.S., and which has just come to my attention.

Unfortunately, I was not acquainted with your views in time to credit them at a symposium on gene-enzyme relationships which was held at Detroit early in November. Monod had gone so far as to imply that even in induced enzyme formation, the inducing substrate acts as a template for "molding" the enzyme -- in a rebuttal to this proposal, I was moved like yourself to question the same concept even for antibody formation, where there is at least some basis for it. I am told that this "natural selection" hypothesis is not very distant from Ehrlich's own views, but have not delved deeply into his writings. At any rate, I was pleased to see at least one explicit hypothesis of the mechanism by which an antigen could "select" one of many synthetic potentialities, and I just wanted to let you know that you have at least one second for your proposal.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics